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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FEDERAL AID PROGRAMS HELP RESTORATION

On a thousand fronts, in every section of the country, fish and game specialists are fighting the fight to keep America's fish and wildlife resources apace with or ahead of the ever-increasing demand.

The huge conservation program which is being carried on aggressively by each of the 48 States and the Territories is bolstered by a Federal aid program which during the last fiscal year made nearly \$16 million available to the States, Acting Secretary of the Interior Clarence A. Davis said today.

The money is used on State projects which have promise of fish and game restoration and are approved by the Fish and Wildlife Service. These projects may be of a physical nature--acquisition of land and waters, development of fishing lakes, feeding and breeding areas or sanctuaries; or they may be research efforts designed to increase the fish and game supply by solving the many problems for which the specialists have no answer.

The objective of the Federal aid program--the restoration of fish and wildlife--is further buttressed by vigorous, effective and varied projects conducted with State funds, and by the farflung refuge, research, and hatchery program of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

"The need for this continuous, all-out effort at restoration of our fish and wildlife resources is substantiated by cold statistics," Davis said. "In 1954 there were 18.5 million persons in this country holding State fishing licenses. This is twice the number held ten years ago and it is increasing at the rate of a million a year.

"There were more than 14 million persons with State hunting licenses, a substantial increase over what it was ten years ago, but only half what it is expected to be in 1975.

"Add to this the fact that our increasing population and our increasing need for homes and for farm and industrial lands and for more water means that fish and game habitats are shrinking faster than new ones can be developed. Then an idea of just what kind of task lies ahead for those who would perpetuate our wildlife resources is apparent."

During the year ending June 30, 1955, Federal aid funds obligated for the restoration of wildlife amounted to \$11,153,000. Federal aid funds obligated for fish restoration amounted to \$4,692,000. During the year the various States and Territories had in operation 706 projects designed to restore wildlife and 372 projects aimed at increasing our sport fish supply. Many of these are continuing projects.

Some of the accomplishments in the realm of restoration of wildlife detailed by the Acting Secretary include:

Forty-five States developed waterfowl nesting, resting or feeding areas.

Nineteen States were using captive geese to establish or reestablish good feeding and resting areas.

Eight States constructed the works necessary to create small marshes while others worked on areas as large as 18,000 acres.

Eleven States created impoundments for both fish and wildlife.

Thirty-seven States, working cooperatively with private landowners, created or improved habitats for rabbits, quail and pheasants.

Many States, particularly in the arid regions, established watering places for wildlife. Six of these in Nevada were watering flocks of Gambel's quail numbering 2,800 birds.

Thirty-two States purchased 81,000 acres and leased 145,000 acres of land for wildlife purposes.

Forty-five States conducted wildlife investigations necessary for intelligent preparation of hunting and fishing regulations, to learn more about the success of previous programs, to get more data on natural increases in many species, and to get more information on winter population and migration.

Eight States worked on ways to make wasteland into big game range.

Many States issued some publications on their findings, the total bulletins, books and reports approaching the 400 mark.

Some of the accomplishments in fish restoration were:

Forty-three States engaged in one or more vitally important fact-finding projects.

Thirteen States eliminated undesirable fish from a total of 36 lakes.

Six States had projects for stream development and watershed improvement.

Sixteen States purchased land for public fishing areas. Nearly 2,700 acres were purchased and an additional 56,000 acres were leased for fishery projects.

Seventeen States and Alaska constructed access roads to fishing areas.

Considerable knowledge was gained by research on poisoning of a lake or stream to rid waters of trash fish without unduly harming sport fish.

Studies were in progress on ways and means of making reservoirs more productive and better able to fill the need for more public fishing waters.

Marine fish and fishing came under the scrutiny of biologists in 12 of the coastal States. Studies varied from survival of ocean salmon in California to Atlantic salmon migration in Maine.

Practically all the expenses attendant to developing sport hunting and fishing are paid by those who hunt and fish. The approximately \$15,000,000 for Federal aid in Fish and Wildlife restoration comes from a special tax on hunting and fishing equipment. This money is apportioned to States on a formula based on area and number of license holders, and is used to reimburse the States for up to three-fourths of the cost of beneficial fish and wildlife conservation projects.

During the year ending June 30, 1955, slightly more than 32,650,000 persons held State hunting and fishing licenses and Federal duck stamps. These individuals paid approximately \$85 million dollars for the privilege of hunting and fishing. Of this amount the Fish and Wildlife Service received \$4,542,000 duck stamp money which was used in behalf of migratory birds, primarily waterfowl. The remainder was used by the respective States to meet the State's one-fourth of the Federal aid program and to cover all other expenses of State fish and game administration.

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